

In this Issue:

Women in Black 1

from the earth, up 3

Question War 5

The War Against Ourselves 6

Reflections on the National Security Strategy of the USA 8

Connect with RPEC, Join our e-mail List! 9

Please Help Us Save the Mattaponi 10

What's Happening? 11

Alternatives to Violence (AVP) Opportunities for Training In Richmond 12



Women in Black

A Global Movement for Peace and Justice

by Judith FaGalde Bennett

Suzanne Stage is clear about why she is part of Women in Black. "I don't think we have that many options left," she says, "it's either peace or annihilation." Stage is one of the growing number of Richmond women who are joining other women across the world to walk in silence, clad only in black, to witness to their commitment to peace with justice and their opposition to war and all violence. Stage, together with her doctor-daughter, Melissa, launched the Richmond group which staged their first vigil on December 28th. Beginning with thirty participants, the group has had as many as 138 local women participating in weekly WIB demonstrations.

Women in Black: Where Did It Come From?

The Women in Black movement began in Israel in 1988 when women began a protest against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and demanded peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Supportive Italian women took the idea home with them, and similar mobilizations have taken place in many cities there. Subsequent contact between Italian and Yugoslavian women led to the organization of Women in Black in Yugoslavia, with vigils held in Republic Square in Belgrade, in opposition to Serbian aggression.

Since Women in Black is a grassroots movement, it is impossible to determine the number of women who identify with it, although it has clearly become a worldwide movement. WIB conferences were held in Jerusalem in 1994, with an annual demonstration each August since 1994. A WIB demonstration was held at the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing, and a photo exhibition of WIB demonstrations was held in New York City in

(Continued on page 2)

rpec NEWS

is a publication of the
Richmond Peace
Education Center

14 N. Laurel St.,
Richmond VA 23220

Phone: (804)358-1958

Fax: (804)358-2213

E-mail:
rpec.1@juno.com

RPEC Web Page:
<http://www.rpec.org>

RPEC STAFF

Executive Director:
Ken Willis

Office Manager
Johnnie J. Taylor

Volunteer Office Assistant
Jean Beck

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor:
Bill Gerow

Program Committee:

Steve Colecchi
John Gallini
Ben Blevins
Sue Frankel-Streit
Cathy Woodson
Ken Willis
Judy Bennett
Dave Depp

The opinions and
announcements in rpecNEWS
are those of the individual
writers and are not necessarily
endorsed by RPEC.

rpecNEWS is published 10
times per year and has a
circulation of approximately
1,200.



(Continued from page 1)

1996. An active WIB group in London has held vigils and other actions since the 1990s, including at the time of the Gulf War in 1991. Despite its unstructured and informal nature, Women in Black was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.

Why Only Women? Why Wear Black?

Women have a long history as peace activists. In many cultures, black is the color associated with death, loss, mourning and destruction; it is also connected with graveness and silence. The purpose of Women in Black is not to suggest that women are necessarily any more likely to be peacemakers or peace activists than men, but that women have a particular experience with life because of their disproportionate involvement in care-giving. In addition, they are disproportionately the victims of gendered violence in both peace and war, and they constitute the majority of the world's refugees.

Feminists have a deep-seated unease about the violent nature of male-dominated cultures and thus have particular perspectives on war and peace. Spokespersons for the movement point out that in mixed groups, women's voices are often drowned out by men. In addition, the potential always exists that even a peace demonstration can take a violent turn. Women participating in WIB demonstrations are choosing an action with which they feel comfortable, i.e., it is a nonviolent action that makes its point in a dramatic and expressive way. Local participants in Women in Black ask supportive men to do two things: "Drive your mother, daughter, wife, friend to the vigil so she does not have to park," and "please tell all your women-friends."

They focus on the issue of war on Iraq "because the threat of impending armed conflict is an immediate one with large-scale global consequences," and view "killing, violence, destruction, acts of terrorism and acts of retaliation" as "primitive and unnecessary reactions to conflict." Because war produces physical and emotional consequences that go beyond immediate conflict, affecting lives for decades to come, Women in Black holds that diplomacy and peaceful mediation are the world's only viable options for resolving international conflict.

What Local WIB Participants Say

Like many participants in the local Women in Black, Suzanne Stage believes that war should be waged today only with the approval of the United Nations. She sees the current debate in the UN as a good thing. "Finally, the UN is doing what it was meant to do," she says, "and people all over the world are having a say in the decision, not just one country."

A 64-year-old child care director who has marched with WIB for five weeks notes that she "marched a lifetime ago with my children in strollers during Vietnam." She had marched in Richmond's freezing rain on February 15th, but on February 22nd she was sorely tempted to stay home and observe a day of rest. However, it was the

(Continued on page 7)

from the earth, up

by Anthony Flaccavento

Before any course of action, we should first ask:

What is already here?

What does nature allow us to do here?

What does nature help us to do here?

Wendell Berry

On November 1, 1996, the day-shift crew arrived at the Louisiana Pacific Waferboard factory in Dungannon, Virginia. Greeted by a small group of security guards and a management representative, they were told to go home. The plant was closed. Permanently. No notice had been given. Ten years after opening its doors in this richly forested Scott County community, the plant laid off nearly 100 workers. The profits from this plant, management said, were not high enough to keep it operating.

The Appalachian regions of Tennessee and Virginia are not in crisis. Rather, the area is suffering from long-term economic stagnation and steady ecological deterioration. It is an all too common story of individuals and communities gradually relinquishing their skills, knowledge, and bonds. But there is another Appalachian tale unfolding. It is the evolving story of community-based initiatives regenerating the region's economy and culture from within.

At Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD), we focus our efforts on a 10-county area of southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee, a part of Appalachia that has sustained jobless rates two to three times higher than US rates.

Our plan was clear yet ambitious: to help the community build a more sustainable economy from networks of small, local endeavors. ASD set itself the task of transforming two central legs of Appalachia's economy: agriculture and timber.

From tobacco to food

In 1995, a small group of nontraditional farmers launched a fledgling cooperative, a community-supported agriculture (CSA) project, which grew to between 50 and 100 families who received produce directly from farmers. However, the size of the market was limited and we were reaching only a small percentage of tobacco and other conventional Appalachian farmers.

In 1999, we began marketing our produce to a small regional chain called White's Fresh Foods. During 1999 and 2000, the base of farmers began to grow, attracted by the larger market provided by White's. The growing market for local organic produce provided a viable option to tobacco. In close consultation with consumers and the buyers at the grocery stores, we developed a growers' network with a trademark label and brand name, Appalachian Harvest, which became the umbrella for an increasingly wide range of certified organic, locally raised crops.

The network began to take off in 2001 with more farmers joining, larger farms involved, and more outlets. Three new, larger supermarket chains joined as partners. Two of them were family-owned, based right in Virginia. From 2000 to 2001, sales nearly tripled, and projections suggest another 200 to 300 percent growth in 2002.

(Continued on page 4)

from the earth, up

(Continued from page 3)

Strengthening community through farming

When ASD began its effort to build a more diversified and healthy farm economy in the late 1990s, we attempted to mimic the best features of the tobacco infrastructure, those elements that had helped keep family farmers viable and encouraged community involvement and pride.

The network meets monthly to decide what to grow, how much to grow, when to plant, and who is to plant what. New farmers are matched with crops that are easier to grow, until they gain more experience. Farmers have gradually recognized their responsibility to one another, both to produce what they pledge and to maintain high quality standards.

University faculty, county extension agents, ASD staff, and farmers collaborate in research and assist farmers transitioning from tobacco to alternative crops and from conventional practices to organic practices.

Ripple effects

With this sustainable agriculture infrastructure now taking shape, we are just beginning to realize some of the potential for economies of synergy and greater regional self-reliance.

A large egg company looking for a means to comply with stringent water quality standards saw this opportunity. The result: a high nutrient compost produced within 75 miles of all our farms, priced at half of what “imported” organic fertilizers cost.

Locally owned farm stores have begun to carry organic fertilizers and disease- and pest-control products in response to growing demand from farmers. This makes organic farm inputs widely available and helps institutionalize sustainable practices.

In 2001 we transformed a portion of an old tobacco barn into a small packing and grading facility. This system will increase the payments to farmers by adding value to the produce. This year, we have added a much larger building beside the barn, creating a total area of about 5,000 square feet. With this new facility, we can process 3,000 to 4,000 boxes of organic produce each week, our projected market demand.

The sorting and grading process creates “seconds” and culls—for example, tomatoes that are too ripe or peppers that are too small. The Clinch Community Kitchen, a commercial kitchen incubator, will be working with ASD to develop salsa, bruschetta sauce, and other tomato-based products using these seconds. If successful, we will create high-value products from what otherwise would be low-value produce, while diversifying our offerings, extending the season for Appalachian Harvest products, and providing new opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

From forests to floors

ASD’s sustainable forestry and wood products program follows a path similar to our agriculture efforts. ASD forester Emily Duncan works with interested landowners to assess the health of their forests and inventory the timber. Together, they create a plan to protect streams and waterways, conserve wildlife habitat, and regenerate biodiversity.

(Continued on page 5)

from the earth, up

(Continued from page 4)

If appropriate, Emily then marks some timber for harvesting. The cut includes a high proportion of lower-quality trees in order to help regenerate both species diversity and better quality timber for future generations. Trees harvested under our standards are purchased by ASD, sawed into boards, dried in our dry kiln, and then manufactured into flooring, cabinets, and other products by local companies.

This restorative forestry requires at least three things: patient landowners willing to forego some money in the short term in favor of long-term wealth, skilled loggers, and markets that pay closer attention to the true cost for wood products.

The beauty of the process is its affordability. Because of the proximity of trees to their market, and because of the value adding-steps in the process, it is possible to pay a substantial premium to loggers and landowners, while charging only slightly more to the end user.

The Louisiana Pacific waferboard factory that laid off nearly 100 people in 1996 relied on extensive clear-cutting for its cheap supply of timber, and it established no roots in the community. ASD and its many partners are working towards a different type of economic development—one that builds upon and adds value to the ecological wealth of our communities. Like a good farmer, the more we pursue this path, the more we see what is already here and what nature enables us to do now and into the

Question War

By Christopher D. Patterson D.V.M.



**NUCLEAR WEAPONS:
IRAQ - 0
NORTH KOREA - 1-2
UNITED STATES - 10,000+**

* source: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Wage Peace: Question our War on Iraq.

a message from the Richmond Peace Education Center www.questionwar.org

The Richmond Peace and Education Center is proud to announce our Question War advertising campaign! The ads have been designed to encourage critical thinking about our governments proposed war with Iraq and persuade people to consider peaceful options.

The multiple-ad Question War campaign will be featured on GRTC buses, in Style Magazine, as Public Service Announcements on local radio stations, and all over Richmond as posters and leaflets.

We have been fortunate that the professional design firm, ALR Design, has volunteered its services to work closely with RPEC to develop this campaign. The ads will question the war through establishing peace making as patriotic, making the connection between violence in our communities and violence that we perpetrate abroad, establishing the

need for the U.S. to be a leader in disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, highlighting the monetary waste of war when our communities are struggling economically, and much, much more.

Please visit www.QuestionWar.org to learn more about this campaign.

Our Question War advertising campaign has tremendous potential. Its influence is only limited by the amount of money that we can raise to pay for ads in Richmond media outlets. Please make as generous a donation as you can and help us sell peace to Richmond! Donations can be made via mail to:

Richmond Peace Education Center
14 N. Laurel St.
Richmond, VA 23220

*All donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to the

The War Against Ourselves

An Interview with Major Doug Rokke

Doug Rokke has a PhD in health physics and was originally trained as a forensic scientist. When the Gulf War started, he was assigned to prepare soldiers to respond to nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare, and sent to the Gulf. What he experienced has made him a passionate voice for peace, traveling the country to speak out. The following interview was conducted by the director of the Traprock Peace Center, Sunny Miller, supplemented with questions from *YES!* editors. (*This article is a shortened version from that published in YES! Magazine, Spring, 2003.*)

QUESTION: Any viewer who saw the war on television had the impression this was an easy war, fought from a distance and soldiers coming back relatively unharmed. Is this an accurate picture?

ROKKE: At the completion of the Gulf War, when we came back to the United States in the fall of 1991, we had a total casualty count of 760: 294 dead, a little over 400 wounded or ill. But the casualty rate now for Gulf War veterans is approximately 30 percent. Of those stationed in the theater, including after the conflict, 221,000 have been awarded disability, according to a Veterans Affairs (VA) report issued September 10, 2002...

Q: You have been a military man for over 35 years. You served in Vietnam as a bombardier and you are still in the US Army Reserves. Now you're going around the country speaking about the dangers of depleted uranium (DU). What made you decide you had to speak publicly about DU?

ROKKE: Everybody on my team was getting sick. My best friend John Sitton was dying. The military refused him medical care, and he died. John set up the medical evacuation communication system for the entire theater. Then he got contaminated doing the work.

John and Rolla Dolph and I were best friends in the civilian world, the military world, forever. Rolla got sick. I personally got the order that sent him to war. We were both activated together. I was given the assignment to teach nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare and make sure soldiers came back alive and safe... But when I got all the training together, all the environmental cleanup procedures together, all the medical directives, nothing happened...

DU is an extremely effective weapon. Each tank round is 10 pounds of solid uranium-238 contaminated with plutonium, neptunium, americium. It is pyrophoric, generating intense heat on impact, penetrating a tank because of the heavy weight of its metal. When uranium munitions hit, it's like a firestorm inside any vehicle or structure, and so we saw tremendous burns, tremendous injuries. It was devastating.

The US military decided to blow up Saddam's chemical, biological, and radiological stockpiles in place, which released the contamination back on the US troops and on everybody in the whole region. We had all of the various nerve agents. We think there were biological agents, and there were destroyed nuclear reactor facilities. It was a toxic wasteland. And we had DU added to this whole mess.

When we first got assigned to clean up the DU and arrived in northern Saudi Arabia, we started getting sick within 72 hours. Respiratory problems, rashes, bleeding, open sores started almost immediately.

When you have a mass dose of radioactive particulates and you start breathing that in, the deposit sits in the back of the pharynx, where the cancer started initially on the first guy. It doesn't take a lot of time. I had a father and son

(Continued on page 7)

Women in Black

(Continued from page 2)

thought of the new 3-year-old Muslim child in her center that week that moved her from her warm home to the Boulevard. “My new little friend,” she writes, “is the face of every child we plan to kill,” and that thought moved her reluctantly to don her black and reach for her umbrella. Once again, she says, “it was cold. It was wet. It was miserable and I seriously soaked my socks in a curbside puddle.” But, she says, “I had one little three-year-old girl in my head and she kept me warm in a very special way.”

Another woman writes that, as she walked, she thought about “what a fortunate people we are. We could all go home to our warm homes, put on dry clothes and have something warm to drink.” Noting that so many people in this world don’t get to go home, she felt a deep sadness that “so many people live in such turmoil and this war will only make things worse.”

How to Participate

Richmond Women in Black invites interested women to join them on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. in front of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts on the Boulevard. Children are also welcome. Participants are asked to dress all in black or dark colors, and to join in silent procession along Boulevard to Broad Street and back again. In so doing, according to their flyer, they experience “a sense of solidarity and purpose as women,” lend support “to other women around the world who are often

The War Against Ourselves

(Continued from page 6)

working with me. The father is already dead from lung cancer, and the sick son is still denied medical care.

Q: What kind of training have the troops had, who are getting called up right now—the ones being shipped to the vicinity of what may be the next Gulf War?

ROKKE: As the director of the Depleted Uranium Project, I developed a 40-hour block of training. All that curriculum has been shelved. They turned what I wrote into a 20-minute program that’s full of distortions. It doesn’t deal with the reality of uranium munitions.

The equipment is defective. The General Accounting Office verified that the gas masks leak, the chemical protective suits leak. Unbelievably, Defense Department officials recently said the defects can be fixed with duct tape.

Q: If my neighbors are being sent off to combat with equipment and training that is inadequate, and into battle with a toxic weapon, DU, who can speak up?

ROKKE: Every husband and wife, son and daughter, grandparent, aunt and uncle, needs to call their congressmen and cite these official government reports and force the military to ensure that our troops have adequate equipment and adequate training. If we don’t take care of our American veterans after a war, as happened with the Gulf War, and now we’re about ready to send them into a war again—we can’t do it. We can’t do it. It’s a crime against God. It’s a crime against humanity to use uranium munitions in a war, and it’s devastating to ignore the consequences of war...

The US Army made me their expert. I went into the project with the total intent to ensure they could use uranium munitions in war, because I’m a warrior. What I saw as director of the project, doing the research and working with my own medical conditions and everybody else’s, led me to one conclusion: uranium munitions must be banned from the planet, for eternity, and medical care must be provided for everyone, not just the US or the Canadians

Q: It does sound remarkable for someone who has been in the military for 35 years to be talking about when peace should begin.

ROKKE: When I do these talks, especially in churches, I’m reminded that these religions say, “And a child will lead us to peace.” But if we contaminate the environment, where will the child come from? The children won’t be there. War has become obsolete, because we can’t deal with the consequences on our warriors or the environment, but more important, on the noncombatants. When you reach a point in war when the contamination and the health effects of war can’t be cleaned up because of the weapons you use, and medical care can’t be given to the soldiers who participated in the

Wendell Berry's Reflections on the National Security Strategy of the USA

Kentucky farmer Wendell Berry is the author of more than thirty books including, most recently, *In the Presence of Fear: Three Essays for a Changed World*. The following are excerpts from an essay which was published in the *New York Times* as a full page ad on 2/9/03. The complete essay can be read on the Orion Society website: <http://www.oriononline.org/pages/om/03-2om/Berry.html>

THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY published by the White House in September 2002, if carried out, would amount to a radical revision of the political character of our nation. Its central and most significant statement is this:

While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists... (p. 6)

Who is this "we"? This "we" of the new strategy can refer only to the president. It is a royal "we". A head of state, preparing to act alone in starting a preemptive war, will need to justify his intention by secret information, and will need to plan in secret and execute his plan without forewarning. The idea of a government acting alone in preemptive war is inherently undemocratic, for it does not require or even permit the president to obtain the consent of the governed.

Would be participating citizens of a democratic nation, unwilling to have their consent coerced or taken for granted, therefore have no choice but to remove themselves from the illegitimate constraints of this "we" in as immediate and public a way as possible.

THE ALLEGED JUSTIFICATION for this new strategy is the recent emergence in the United States of international terrorism. But why the events of September 11, 2001, horrifying as they were, should have called for a radical new investiture of power in the executive branch is not clear.

The National Security Strategy defines terrorism as "*premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents*" (p. 5). This is truly a distinct kind of violence, but to imply by the word "terrorism" that this sort of terror is the work exclusively of "terrorists" is misleading. The "legitimate" warfare of technologically advanced nations likewise is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents. The distinction between the intention to perpetrate violence against innocents, as in "terrorism," and the willingness to do so, as in "war," is not a source of comfort.

Supposedly, if a nation perpetrates violence officially -- whether to bomb an enemy airfield or a hospital it is not guilty of "terrorism." But there is no need to hesitate over the difference between "terrorism" and any violence or threat of violence that is terrifying. The National Security Strategy wishes to cause "terrorism" to be seen "*in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide*" (p. 6) but not in the same light as war. It accepts and affirms the legitimacy of war.

THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM is not, strictly speaking, a war against nations, even though it has already involved international war in Afghanistan and presidential threats against other nations. This is a war against "*the embittered few*" "*thousands of trained terrorists*" -- who are "*at large*" (p. 5) among many millions of others who are, in the language of this document, "innocents," and thus are deserving of our protection.

Unless we are willing to kill innocents in order to kill the guilty, the need to be lethal will be impeded constantly by the need to be careful. Because we must suppose a new supply of villains to be always in the making, we can expect the war on terrorism to be more or less endless, endlessly costly and endlessly supportive of a thriving bureaucracy.

(Continued on page 9)

Wendell Berry's Reflections on the National Security Strategy of the USA

(Continued from page 8)

Unless, that is, we should become willing to ask why, and to do something about the causes. Why do people become terrorists? Such questions arise from the recognition that problems have causes. There is, however, no acknowledgement in The National Security Strategy that terrorism might have a cause that could possibly be discovered and possibly remedied. "*The embittered few*," it seems, are merely "*evil*." ...

SINCE THE END of World War II, when the terrors of industrial warfare had been fully revealed, many people and, by fits and starts, many governments have recognized that peace is not just a desirable condition, as was thought before, but a practical necessity. But we have not yet learned to think of peace apart from war. We wait, still, until we face terrifying dangers and the necessity to choose among bad alternatives, and then we think again of peace, and again we fight a war to secure it.

At the end of the war, if we have won it, we declare peace; we congratulate ourselves on our victory; we marvel at the newly-proved efficiency of our latest weapons; we ignore the cost in lives, materials, and property, in suffering and disease, in damage to the natural world; we ignore the inevitable residue of resentment and hatred; and we go on as before, having, as we think, successfully defended our way of life.

That is pretty much the story of our victory in the Gulf War of 1991. In the years between that victory and September 11, 2001, we did not alter our thinking about peace and war -- that is, we thought much about war and little about peace; we continued to punish the defeated people of Iraq and their children; we made no effort to reduce our dependence on the oil we import from other, potentially belligerent countries; we made no improvement in our charity toward the rest of the world; we made no motion toward greater economic self-reliance; and we continued our extensive and often irreversible damages to our own land. We appear to have assumed merely that our victory confirmed our manifest destiny to be the richest, most powerful, most wasteful nation in the world. After the catastrophe of September 11, it again became clear to us how good it would be to be at peace, to have no enemies, to have no more needless deaths to mourn. And then, our need for war following with the customary swift and deadly logic our need for peace, we took up the customary obsession with the evil of other people.

It is useless to try to adjudicate a long-standing animosity by asking who started it or who is the most wrong. The only sufficient answer is to give up the animosity and try forgiveness, to try to love our enemies and to talk to them and (if we pray) to pray for them. If we can't do any of that, then we must begin again by trying to imagine our enemies' children who, like our children, are in mortal danger because of enmity that they did not cause.

We can no longer afford to confuse peaceability with passivity. Authentic peace is no more passive than war. Like war, it calls for discipline and intelligence and strength of character, though it calls also for higher principles and aims. If we are serious about peace, then we must work for it as ardently, seriously, continuously, carefully, and

Connect with RPEC, Join our e-mail List!

Just send an e-mail to rpec-subscribe@lists.riseup.net and you will be signed on. You'll get all the latest news and information from RPEC and the Richmond peace community. Plus, once you are signed on you can send your own peace-related news and announcements to the RPEC membership by just e-mailing rpec@lists.riseup.net. What are you waiting for? Get connected today!"



**RPEC has a new e-mail
address:
rpec.1@juno.com**

Please Help Us Save the Mattaponi

Your help is needed to stop the proposed King William Reservoir and Save the Mattaponi River. Here are some dates of upcoming events:

Sunday, April 6 - 2:00 p.m. - Rally for the River, Walkerton boat landing, King William County

Saturday, April 12 - 10:00 a.m. - Meet at Bell Tower, Capitol Grounds, Richmond for Earth Day outreach to Save the Mattaponi, sponsored by Sierra Club

Tuesday, April 22 - 2:00 p.m. until about 8:00 p.m. - Virginia Marine Resources Commission public hearing at Warwick High School, Newport News.

Contact **Tyla Matteson** (see bottom) for directions, carpooling, other info.

The VMRC Commissioners will decide whether to grant a permit for an intake structure in the Mattaponi River, as well as for other water distribution lines and discharge structures in nearby water bodies.

Among the criteria that the VMRC Board will consider are:

-- Harm to the **fisheries** on the Mattaponi River. The shad fishery is at about 5% of its historic level and is in recovery, with hatcheries operating, one at the Mattaponi Indian Reservation. Shad and other anadromous fish will be harmed by the withdrawal of up to 75 million gallons of water per day from the River.

-- As a result of the water withdrawals, the salinity levels in the River will be increased, and not only will the fisheries be impacted, but also the **wetland plants**. Of great concern is the harm to the sensitive joint vetch, a federally threatened plant species, also in a recovery program.

-- **Water quality** will be compromised with the change in salinity levels, which will be felt in the Mattaponi River, York River, and the Chesapeake Bay. This proposed reservoir would inundate 1500 acres in King William County, which includes 437 acres of wetlands, making it the largest loss of wetlands in Virginia since the inception of the Clean Water Act in 1972.

--Impacts to **neighboring property owners** must also be considered.

A recent report on March 12 from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to VMRC stated that the proposed intake structure on the Mattaponi would adversely impact the shad, and other fish, particularly in their juvenile stages, and as a spawning and nursery habitat. The report also addresses the harm to wetland plants as greater than previously believed. VMRC Board members should find this report of great interest, in providing rationale for denying the reservoir permit.

You may send a letter to:

Commissioner William A. Pruitt

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

2600 Washington Ave, 3rd Floor

Newport News, Va. 23607

(include a CC to Tony Watkinson, Habitat Management Division)

or Fax: 757-247-2020 or

Email: bpruitt@mrc.state.va.us and copy to twatkinson@mrc.state.va.us

See website: www.savethemattaponi.org for more information or contact Tyla Matteson at E-mail: tmatteson1@mindspring.com or phone: 804-275-6476

CALENDAR**April 2003****Meetings of Local Groups**

- Every Sunday** **Food Not Bombs, Richmond <Meal Sharing**, 4:00 P.M. in Monroe Park. Hotline # 359-4880 for details
- Every 3rd Wed.** **Amnesty International**, 7:00 PM at Friends Meeting. 4500 Kensington Ave. Call 320-9488
- Every 2nd Thurs.** **Virginians Against Handgun Violence**, 7:15 PM., Jewish Community Center, B. Phillips-Taylor, 737-2975
- Every 3rd Friday** **Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace**, 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901
- Every Thurs.** **Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY)**, 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line.
- Every 3rd Sat.** **Equality Virginia** - 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816.
- Every 3rd Sun.** **Richmond Community for Ethics and Meaning**, at First Unitarian. 1000 Blanton Ave., 5-8 PM, Susan at 784-4069.
- Every 4th Sat.** **Pax Christi Peace Community** - Call Elaine Ogburn for details - 320-4514.
- Every 1st Mon.** **Virginia People of Faith for Alternatives to the Death Penalty**, 4:45 PM
Catholic Diocese Conference Room, Floyd and Cherry, Kathleen Kenney, 359-5661

UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 3** **Scheduled execution of Brandon Hedrick** - Thursday, 8:30 pm - A prayer service will be held at St. Peter Catholic Church, 8th and Grace St.
- April 4** **Bishop Tom Gumbleton will speak at Church of the Redeemer** - Friday, 7:30 pm; 8275 Meadowbridge Rd. in Mechanicsville. An unusual opportunity to hear a true peacemaker!
- April 6** **Dr. Charles M. Swezey will speak on Christian Responses to Conflict: Pacifism, the Crusades, and the Just war Theory**, Part II at the Aubry Brown Peace Forum, Sunday, 9:30 am at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, 3601 Seminary Ave.
- April 9** **Scheduled execution of Earl Blamblett** - Wednesday, 8:30 pm. A prayer service will be held at Richmond Friends Meeting, Kensington and Commonwealth.
- April 13** **The Aubry Brown Peace Forum** - Dr. Husain Mustafa will speak on "**The Conflict in Iraq**" at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, 3601 Seminary Ave.
- April 18** **Stations of the Cross on Church Hill** - Good Friday, 11:45 am - 3:30 pm - Begins at Patrick Henry Park and follows a three mile route through Church Hill, stopping to pray at appropriate sites for each of the fourteen stations.
- April 27** **Dr. Robert Smylie will speak on The Role of the U.N. in Peacemaking (tentative)** - Sunday, 9:30 am - at the Aubry Brown Peace Forum at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, 3601 Seminary Ave.
- May 2** **Benefit concert for RPEC** - John McCutcheon will perform on Friday at 8:00 pm at the VCU Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for students; \$8 for children 6-12.

**Alternatives to Violence (AVP)
Opportunities for Training In Richmond.
Dates&Times:**

May 16, 2003 -Friday - 6p.m - 8:30p.m.
May 17, 2003 -Saturday- 9a.m - 6:00p.m.
May 18, 2003 - Sunday - 9a.m. - 6:00p.m.

Cost: The cost for this weekend, including lunch on Saturday and Sunday ,
snacks, training materials and training is \$35.00 per person.

Registration: Contact the Richmond Peace Education Center at
(804) 358-1958. Or send your name, address, telephone number with
\$35.00 to:
RPEC , 14 North Laurel Street, Richmond, Va. 23220

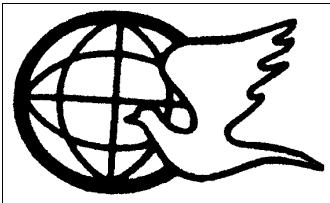
Location: The Catholic Diocese , 811 Cathedral Place. (corner of
Cathedral Place & Cherry Street) Use the Cherry Street Entrance.
Register early, space is limited.

**The Richmond Peace
Education Center
proudly presents**

**JOHN
McCUTCHEON
in concert**

**Friday, May 2, 2003 – 7:30 p.m.
VCU Performing Arts Center,
Richmond, VA**

**Info. & Reservations call
804.358.1958**



**Richmond
Peace
Education
Center** 14 N. Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Richmond, VA
Permit #1119